



## DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

### MEMORANDUM

**Date:** August 15, 2017  
**To:** City Council  
**From:** Christy Carr, AICP  
Senior Planner  
**Subject:** 2008 Bainbridge Island Open Space Study  
Resolution 2017-19

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#### I. BACKGROUND

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A summary of the background, purpose and recommendations of the 2008 Bainbridge Island Open Space Study (*Open Space Study*) is provided in the attached staff memorandum from the October 2, 2008 City Council workshop. The *Open Space Study* was formally adopted by Council via unanimous approval of a motion at the November 12, 2008 meeting:

*Move to accept the City of Bainbridge Island Open Space Study October 2008 and authorize the Land Use Committee to work with staff to develop a work plan for adopting a comprehensive open space conversation plan and watershed plan before incorporation of the priority lands into the 2025 – 2030 project and the growth strategy amendments to the Comprehensive Plan.*

#### II. BRIEF SUMMARY OF *OPEN SPACE STUDY*

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The *Open Space Study* provides “an assessment of high-priority open space areas for conservation of vital environmental and human-valued resources, as well as options to design a city-wide program to preserve open space and enhance the natural environment across the island.” The priority open space areas were determined through both a scientific, landscape ecology-based analysis and the input, knowledge and ideas of citizens. The results include identification of 22 high priority open space areas totaling approximately 900 acres and an additional 20 and 23 areas of medium and low priority areas, respectively. The *Open Space Study* pairs this inventory with a laundry list of strategies (20 total) for open space preservation including regulatory strategies and landowner incentives. In addition, seven key recommendations are provided specific to Bainbridge Island to develop a multi-pronged approach to open space preservation:

1. Broaden the Mandate for the Open Space Commission
2. Increase Staff Capability to Support the Open Space Commission
3. Explore the Full Menu of Land Protection Techniques and Adopt or Modify Those that are Appropriate
  - a. Refine the Cluster Subdivision Ordinance

- b. Encourage Donation of Conservation Easements
  - c. Purchase Development Rights (PDR) or Conservation Easements on Priority Lands
  - d. Utilize Creative Purchase Options
  - e. Improve Critical Area Overlay District
  - f. Restructure the TDR Program
  - g. Attract Conservation Buyers where Appropriate
  - h. Establish a Technical Resource Team
- 4. Review Funding Options Based on the Trust for Public Lands (TPL) Report
  - 5. Use Priority Open Space Map for Reviewing Open Space Funding Requests
  - 6. Continue to Work Collaboratively with Land Trusts
  - 7. Enhance Existing Tools and Regulations for Open Space Protection or Enhancement

The majority of these recommendations are still relevant but have not been pursued. The Open Space Commission disbanded in 2009. The economic climate immediately following the completion of the *Open Space Study* did not allow for open space preservation funding. The Critical Area Overlay District was eliminated through the 2017 Comprehensive Plan Update. The City continues to work collaboratively with the Bainbridge Island Land Trust and Bainbridge Island Metropolitan Park and Recreation District. The 2012 land use code update process and follow-on work by the ad hoc tree committee has resulted in limited improvements to existing regulations related to landscaping. The City completed a Shoreline Restoration Plan in 2012 that identifies priority sites for restoration. The critical areas ordinance update is currently underway and will likely include allowances for alternative mitigation strategies including off-site preservation and restoration. Revisiting the City's TDR Program is part of the Comprehensive Plan implementation workplan, scheduled to commence this fall. In addition, the *Open Space Study* was recently added to the list of plans included in the City's State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) substantive authority (BIMC 16.04.160) to be used when reviewing potential environmental impacts of land use proposals.

### III. TREE AND LOW IMPACT DEVELOPMENT AD HOC COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

The Tree and LID Ad Hoc Committee recommended to the full City Council that the *Open Space Study* should be adopted. The City Council agreed with that recommendation at their July 18, 2017 meeting. Resolution 2017-19 accomplishes that goal.

### IV. NEXT STEPS

As mentioned above, the *Open Space Study* provides several key recommendations to develop an approach to open space preservation. The adoption of the *Open Space Study* presents the opportunity to revisit these recommendations and other components of the plan to achieve the natural resource goals articulated in the 2017 Comprehensive Plan.